

a1 tested in all functional disciplines. It is anticipated that use of the system contemplated by the present invention will, particularly as between companies, facilitate more efficient account settlement processing and distribution in complex distribution channels.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 2 through line 7 with the following paragraph.

a2 Utilizing EDI (electronic data interchange), the present invention provides a Witness system that ensures information safety, and further provides account settlement processes making use of said Witness system, in order to perform efficient account settlement processing and distribution.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 11 through line 21 with the following paragraph.

a3 A notarization authority (1) receives details prepared by a buyer based, among other things, on delivery vouchers, (2) transmits these details to the seller, and (3) solicits from the seller confirmation that substantive details are in agreement with the content of the delivery vouchers. The Witness receives notification that the seller confirms substantive agreement, whereupon the Witness certifies the aforesaid details as correct documents and confirms said details to the aforesaid buyer and seller.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 24 through page 13, line 7 with the following paragraph.

a4 The Witness server 9 comprises: Delivery detail table 20, which preserves in memory documentation relating, by way of illustration, to delivery vouchers confirmed by monitoring system PC 9; payment terms table 21, which is described hereinafter; and detail group table 22. The above-mentioned computers 5 and 6 can access directly the monitoring system 9 and can refer, illustratively, to the aforesaid confirmation documents.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 15 through page 14, line 3 with the following paragraph.

a5
As disclosed in Fig. 3, the buying company's computer 5 executes requests for confirmation (process J) and executes administrative processing (process K). The aforesaid processes are performed using database 5a and library database 5b (in computer 5). Library interface 5c is used in this case. Similarly, the selling company's computer 6 executes data confirmation requests (process L) and administrative processing (process M). These processes are performed using database 6a (in computer 6) and library database 6b, via library interface 6c. The dotted portions in Fig. 3 represent a corporate client library, which functions, by way of illustration, as an interface for connecting to a network.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 19 through page 17, line 18 with the following paragraph.

a6
As Fig. 9 illustrates, store A, the selling company 2, delivers to supermarket B, the buying company 1, certain foodstuffs and, at that time, sends to supermarket B a delivery voucher (or, alternatively, tenders the voucher with the goods). Computer 5 waits for input of the delivery voucher (step 1, hereinafter "S1", is N (no)), and, when the delivery voucher is entered (S1 is Y (yes)), the system performs input processing of the voucher information. As the example presented in Fig. 9 shows, buyer company 1 (supermarket B) produces the aforesaid delivery voucher data as confirmation document X1. Included in this confirmation document X1 are, illustratively, deliverer's name (selling company 1), delivery date, description of delivered goods, and delivered price. The following information is illustrative of that which is reflected in the confirmation document: The aforesaid deliverer is store A; the delivery date is February 10, 1998; the delivered goods consist of tuna; and the delivered price is 15,000 yen. This confirmation document X1 is transmitted (S3) from buyer company 1 to the Witness 3 (see Fig. 9(1)). Buying company's computer 5 thereafter waits for a response with respect to the aforesaid transmitted data (S4).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 19 through page 18, line 6 with the following paragraph.

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Fig. 11 presents a flowchart describing the processes performed by selling company's computer 6. The Witness PC 9 waits for the data input from the aforesaid

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computer 5 (S5 is N (no)), and, when the input is available (S5 is Y (yes)), confirms the content of the input data (S6) and, where, for example, the data supplied to the monitor PC 9 correspond to the above described confirmation document X1, said confirmation document X1 is registered in detail table 20, described above (S7) (see Fig. 9(2)). Confirmation document X1 is then output, as is, to selling company's computer 6 (S8).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 7 through line 25 with the following paragraph.

a8
Fig. 12 is a flowchart describing the process that selling company's computer 6 performs. As described above, computer 6 waits for the confirmation document X1 input sent from the Witness PC 9 (S9 is N (no)), and, when confirmation document X1 is input (S9 is Y (yes)), compares confirmation document X1 with the contents of the delivery voucher that it previously sent (or tendered with delivery) (S10). It also checks for the presence of errors in the contents of the delivery voucher. As noted above, it is selling company 2 that performs this error-checking task. A "buying company" with whom selling company 2 places its goods is, however, not strictly limited to a specific company (the aforesaid buying company 1). Accordingly, when undertaking the above-described error-checking task, selling company 2 presses the confirmation request button on the computer 6 start menu (see Fig. 7) and displays the confirmation data list screen shown in Fig. 13.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 21 through page 20, line 4 with the following paragraph.

a9
If, on the other hand, it is determined that the aforesaid delivery voucher, or similar document, and the confirmation document X1 differ substantively (S11 is N (no)), selling company 2 presses NG button 41b, shown in Fig. 14, and produces the display disclosed in Fig. 15. Specifically, selling company 2 in this case describes the reason for the NG condition (S14), presses OK button 41, shown in Fig. 14, and sends a NG response to the Witness PC 9 (S15).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21, line 19 through page 22, line 4 with the following paragraph.